South Oxfordshire District Council

Annual Delivery Plan
End of Year Report
2025-26



Strategic priorities

The Way Ahead Council Plan 2025-2029 sets out what the council aims to achieve over this period and contains five strategic priorities:



How performance is measured

The Council Plan 2025–29 provides the strategic context for the delivery and monitoring of council services in accordance with councillor intentions. Aligned to the Council Plan, the Annual Delivery Plan sets out how the strategic priorities and objectives will be implemented and forms the basis for monitoring progress.

The Council Plan and Annual Delivery Plan reflect the council's financial landscape and sit alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). To serve as a credible strategic framework, the Council Plan must balance ambition with financial responsibility and be supported by appropriate budgeting. Resources are targeted towards the priorities identified in the Council Plan, with the Annual Delivery Plan aligning activities and projects to directly support delivery. Together, they form a key part of the 'golden thread' linking strategy to service delivery.

Many of our services are provided by contractors. The performance of our key contractors is monitored through separate reviews and reported to the council's Joint (with Vale of White Horse District Council) Scrutiny Committee.

Effective performance management is a crucial part of the Council Plan and associated Annual Delivery Plans, as it enables the council, residents and all interested stakeholders to monitor progress and see whether we are achieving what we have set out to achieve.

A new reporting dashboard was introduced during 2025-26, utilising the connectivity of the Microsoft 365 suite to reduce the administrative burden on officer teams, enabling them to focus on service delivery. The dashboard makes reporting more accessible and timelier to councillors, members of the public, and other interested stakeholders. The formal performance reporting arrangements will include an annual performance report to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee, alongside opportunities to monitor progress of the plans every quarter.
Previous copies of the council's performance reports are publicly available in the data hub section of the council's website.



Performance Highlights



Economic Development

721 organisation supported through visitor economy initiatives, far above target of 25. 17 businesses supported to improve their sustainability practices, 5
exceeding the target of 15, promoting a thriving and sustainable local economy



Flood and Drainage Action

3 flood and drainage alleviation schemes have been successfully implemented, directly reducing flood risk in vulnerable areas. In addition, 7 locations have recieved specialised expert advice and support on flood mitigation during 2025/26, helping communities to build resilience against future flooding events.



Expansion of Council Housing Provision

The Council has continued to expand its directly owned housing portfolio.By the end of 2025/26, 51 accommodation units were provided in South Oxfordshire. Additionally, 279 new affordable homes were delivered in the district during 2025/26, representing strong progress in our goal to increase delivery and acquisition of affordable housing, and exceeding our target of 205.



Nature Recovery

44% of council land is now managed for nature recovery, up from 39% last year. There are now 358,000 square metres of meadows on council, substantially above the 32,965 square metres on 2024/25.

Participation, Accessibility and Accountability

Ensuring robust governance, transparency, and equitable access to council serviceso

- Promote transparent governance
- Strengthen community participation in local democracy
- Deliver equitable access to services

What we will do:

- Communications and Engagement Service delivery
- Democratic Services meeting administration
- Fulfilment of statutory Information Governance obligations
- Delivery of council consultations
- Deliver Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Completion of Equalities Impact Screenings/Assessments
- Enable the Culture Forum

South Oxfordshire District Council has made strong progress in delivering against its Council Plan priorities to keep residents informed, ensure transparency and accountability, and enable active participation in decision making, while also ensuring equitable and inclusive access to services.

Resident Newsletter

The Council's resident newsletter has exceeded expectations, with 1,414 subscribers compared to a target of 775.

Digital Accessibility

Our site accessibility score was 75%, so there is further progress to be made towards our internal target of 87.7% by 2026/27.



Democratic Meetings

100% of committee meetings are publicly accessible, and 100% of democratic papers are published within 5 working days.

Public Consultation

8 consultation reports have been incorporated into formal decision-making reports.

The present site accessibility score for the council website is 75 per cent, representing progress towards our target of 87.7 per cent by Q4 26/27. Furthermore, 10 Equalities Roadshow events have been delivered during 2025–26, building on the previous year's trial. Council officers travelled across the districts to speak to the public about what the councils are doing to support equality – whether that is financial help for those with disabilities, recognising the LGBTQ+ community and standing against hate crime, to supporting equal opportunities and pay in the workplace.

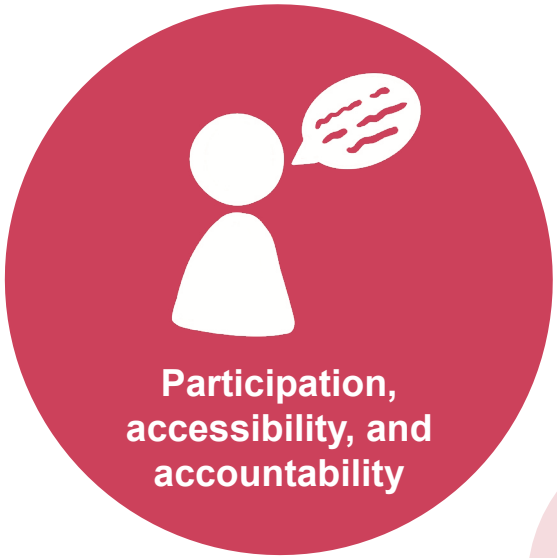
Resident engagement through communications has significantly exceeded expectations, with 1,414 newsletter subscribers compared to a target of 775. This represents a 128 per cent increase from 2024-25 and will have tangible benefits in helping to keep residents better informed about council activities and local issues. 8 public consultation reports were included in the formal decision-making process. Additionally, 12 'You Said, We Did' articles were published on the council's 'Join the Conversation' Platform, capturing our resident's views on a wide range of topics, including forthcoming changes to our licensing policy and the touchscreen parking machines trials in Wallingford.

Transparency remains a central focus, with 100 per cent of committee meetings publicly accessible and 80 per cent live streamed, giving residents visibility of the democratic process. 91.2 per cent of Freedom of Information requests and 84.0 per cent of Environmental Information Regulations requests were handled within statutory deadlines. This shows that further improvement is needed to meet the council's ambitious 100 per cent target, which is higher than the Information Commissioner's Office benchmark of 90 per cent for satisfactory performance.

Action on Participation, Accessibility, and Accountability

Where we want to be:
By fostering a culture of openness and engagement, South Oxfordshire will proactively ensure that all residents, regardless of background and situation, have equitable and inclusive access to services and opportunities. We embrace our differences, celebrate diversity, promote social equity and uphold the highest standards of governance and transparency. The council will be deeply integrated into the community, enhancing resilient communities, actively supporting and empowering residents, embracing grassroots ideas and recognising that local communities know their area best.

Dashboard:
The Power BI Dashboard landing page for this Priority contains performance data over time (where available) and supporting narrative



Strengthen community participation in local democracy

Deliver equitable access to services

Promote transparent governance



How we will do it:

- Direct Action
- Working in Partnership
- Exerting Influence

How we will do it:

- Within the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26
- Beyond the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26 (i.e 2026/27 later)
- Ongoing/business as usual

Strategic Priority: Providing the homes and infrastructure people need
Strategic Objectives: Enable community involvement in planning, support infrastructure integration, deliver effective planning and high-quality development, increase affordable housing supply

Outcomes	What we will do	How we will do it	How we will measure progress	How we will report it	Performance	Progress against target
Keep residents and communities informed of our work	Communications and Engagement Service delivery		•Improve accessibility of websites run by the council	Compliance with WCAG 2.2 AA Standard	No	Ongoing
				Upward trend in Site Improve Accessibility Score (this includes targeting Site Improve's Industry Benchmark of 87.7% by the end of 2026/27 and targeting Site Improve's Site Target of 89.5% by the end of 2028/29)	75%	Ongoing

			•External newsletter sign-up and open rate (Comms and other teams)	X number of subscribers for residents' newsletters (increase) – target of 25% increase in subscribers for 2025/26 (775), followed by an increase of 10% from the existing baseline in subsequent years	1414	Exceeded
				Upward trend in open rates for Town and Parish Newsletters and 'In Focus'	46%	Benchmark
Ensure transparency and accountability in council processes	Democratic Services meeting administration		•All digitally enabled council meetings are livestreamed	100%	100%	Met
			•Publication of all formal democratic papers within five clear working days	100%	100%	Met
	Fulfilment of statutory Information Governance obligations		•Response rate to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests	100% within statutory timeframe	91%	Not Met
			•Response rate to Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests	100% within statutory timeframe	84%	Not Met
	Delivery of council consultations		•Number of 'you said, we did' articles published on the council's 'Join the Conversation' platform	X number (retrospective)	12	N/A
			•Number of consultation reports included in decision-making reports (e.g. Cabinet reports, Individual Cabinet Member Decisions) – demonstrating feedback is included when decisions are made	X number (retrospective)	8	N/A

			•Responses to council consultations - diversity/ representation data and any narrative around engaging specific marginalised groups	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
	Deliver Communications and Engagement Strategy		•Embrace the opportunities that social and digital media channels/platforms bring – publicising the 'you said, we did' articles on the council's 'Join the Conversation' platform, publicising when decisions are made based on public feedback, and promoting participation in committee meetings ahead of time	X number of social posts (target of 5 social posts per quarter on 'you said, we did')	1	Not Met
				100% public accessibility to committee meetings	100%	Met
Ensure all residents have equitable and inclusive access to council services	Completion of Equalities Impact Screenings/		•Equality Impact Screening/ Assessment (EqIA) undertaken for all new formal decision-making processes ; public-facing policies, strategies, and consultations; and projects delivering community benefit	100% & narrative	46%	Not Met
	Assessments Enable the Culture Forum		•Enable delivery of the Culture Forum	N/A (narrative only) – target of 3 Culture Forums per year	3	Met

Action on Climate Change and Nature Recovery

Leading in building climate resilient communities, reducing carbon emissions and restoring our natural environment

- Promote sustainable practices
- Enhance nature recovery
- Deliver action on climate change

What we will do:

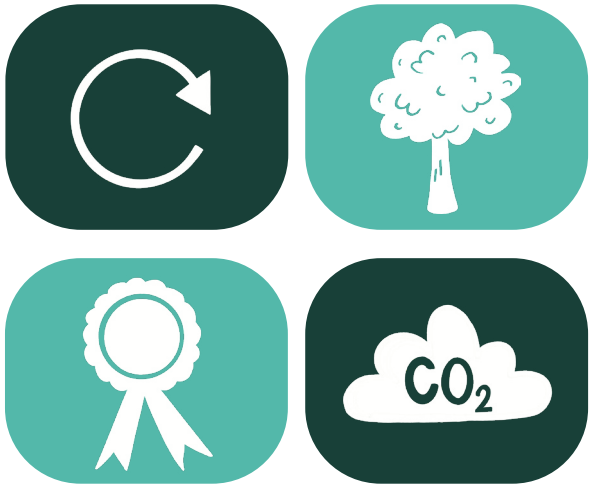
- Council-owned homes decarbonisation programme
- Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery
- South Oxfordshire Net Zero programme
- Proactively engage with and support businesses to decarbonise their own operations and influence others in the community
- Remove fossil fuels from council-operated leisure centres as part of our decarbonisation plans
- Watlington Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Wheatley West Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Nuneham Courtenay Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Technical Services delivery
- Following publication of Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and Action Plan, develop district level adaptation actions for the council and integrate into annual review of the Nature and Climate Action Plan
- Fulfilment of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain obligations
- Promote the development of Habitat Banks in appropriate locations in South Oxfordshire as a key mechanism to drive nature recovery
- Seek opportunities to increase support for and the profile of the Local Wildlife Sites Project as a key mechanism to help deliver Nature Recovery
- Undertake biodiversity audit of corporate land and develop proposals to put nature recovery at the heart of our grounds maintenance operations
- Progress towards adoption of an Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and identifying actions for the council to deliver following adoption of the Strategy
- Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy Action Plan Emergency response work programme

Renewable Energy Systems

1 council-owned home now has a renewable energy system. Our target is 9 by Q1 2027/28.

Energy Performance Certificate Ratings

93% of council homes currently achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above.



Nature Recovery

The proportion of council-owned land actively managed for nature recovery has increased from 39% to 44% over 2025/26

Greenhouse gas emissions

A 14% reduction in gross operational greenhouse gas emissions has been achieved compared to the 2019/20 baseline, across 2025/26.

In 2025/26, the council continued to focus on building climate resilient communities, reducing carbon emissions and restoring the natural environment, in line with its aim to achieve net zero in council operations by 2030 and a net zero district by 2045.

During the year, the council made further progress in reducing its own operational greenhouse gas emissions. The Operational Net Zero Annual Progress Report was considered by Cabinet on 16th October 2025. This paper set out the progress made towards meeting South Oxfordshire's target to be a net zero district by 2045.

It presented the latest data (from 2023) on emissions in South Oxfordshire published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) in July 2025. The latest greenhouse gas emissions data published by DESNZ shows that 792.3 ktCO2e were emitted from sources in South Oxfordshire during 2023, equivalent to 5.2 tCO2e per person. In 2023, greenhouse gas emissions in South Oxfordshire fell by 5.1 per cent compared to the previous year. In 2022, greenhouse gas emissions in South Oxfordshire fell by 4.2 per cent compared to the previous year. Overall, the council has reduced its total greenhouse gas emissions by 14 per cent The council has made its strongest progress in Scope 2 emissions (indirect emissions from purchased electricity used across the council's estate), which have decreased by 51 per cent, indicating substantial improvements in electricity use and sourcing. Meanwhile, Scope 1 emissions (direct emissions) have reduced by 6 per cent and Scope 3 emissions (all other indirect emissions) by 10 per cent.

This is positive progress, but the rate of decarbonisation remains below where it needs to be to reach the target for South Oxfordshire to be a net zero district by 2045. The council will continue to proactively look for opportunities to accelerate the rate of decarbonisation in the district, in particular by working with partnership organisations, as set out in the Nature and Climate Action Plan.

The council also reported that 85 per cent of council-owned homes had an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C or above, amounting to a total of 43 properties. Although this remains below the stated target of 100 per cent, this still represents important progress.

There was continued to support communities to alleviate and adapt to flooding and extreme weather. Three flood and drainage alleviation schemes were facilitated or implemented, meeting the council's target for 2027, ahead of schedule. These schemes included drainage improvements at Nuneham Courtenay, work with Oxfordshire County Council and the grounds maintenance team in Wheatley, and a scheme at Crown Square, Wheatley, where modelling helped secure further funding for work by Oxfordshire County Council.

Further flood risk work also progressed during the year. This included developing the case for water attenuation at Wheatley West, which would form part of a flood alleviation scheme using an Environment Agency grant, and continuing design and negotiation work for a flood alleviation scheme at Watlington. The work on both schemes is due to continue into 2026/27.

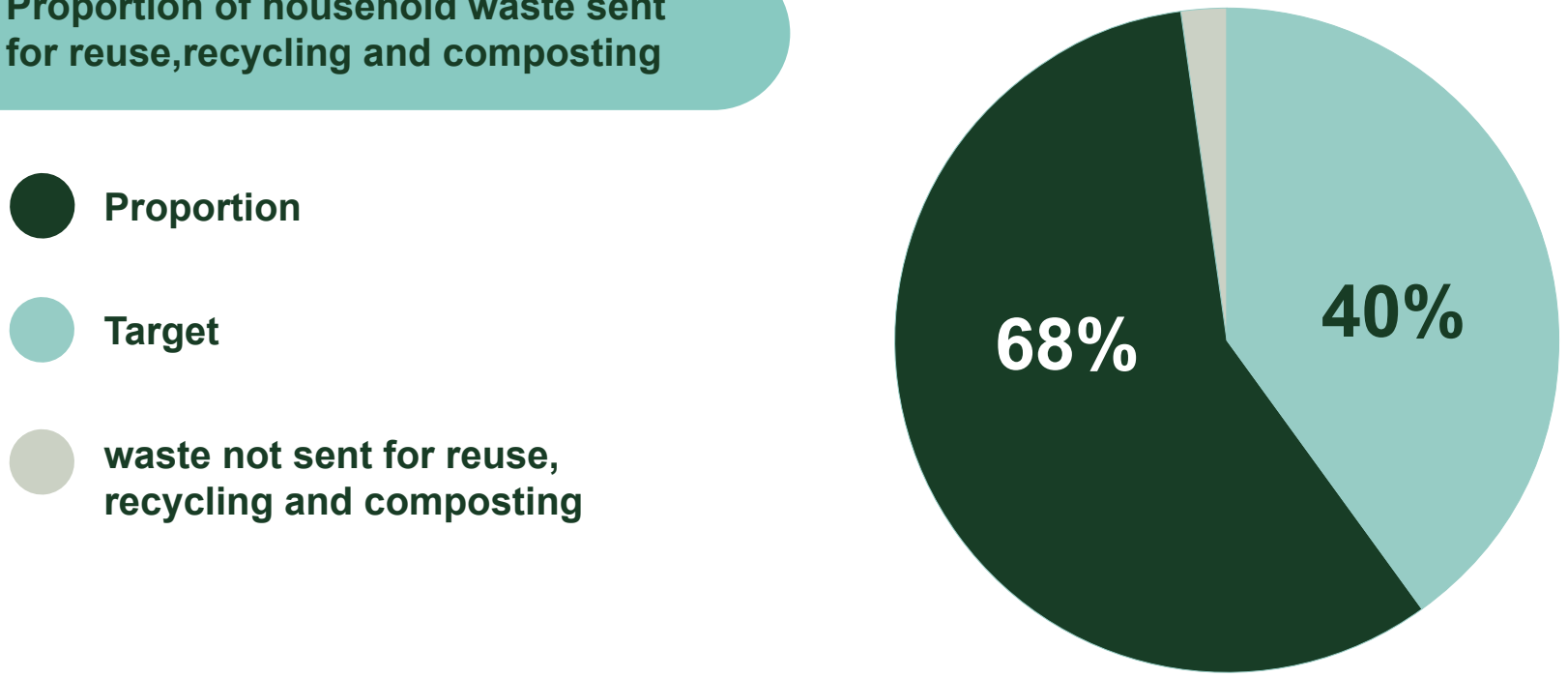


The council also provided Section 19 reports to Oxfordshire County Council for locations including Didcot Trident Business Park, Wheatley, Thame, Harrier Park, Dart Drive/Sutherland Beck, Tiddington, and Derwent Avenue. Section 19 Reports are formal flood reports required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which outline the causes, impacts, and responses of responsible authorities following a significant local flooding event. Additionally, expert advice and support on flood investigations and enforcement was provided at nine locations on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

Nature recovery remained a key area of delivery. 44 per cent of council-owned land was managed for nature recovery, up from 39 per cent last year. The council's work to adopt the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is on target, and RAG rated green. The council also exceeded its target for Local Wildlife Site surveys, with eight sites surveyed. Management advice was provided for five Local Wildlife Sites, meeting the target, and 114 additional biodiversity units were secured through agreed habitat banks in the district.

Additionally, the council continued to promote sustainable practices through waste and recycling services. Residual waste per household was 322kg this year, meeting the target of remaining below 330kg. The proportion of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting was 57.5 per cent, falling from the 61.3 per cent achieved last year.

Proportion of household waste sent for reuse,recycling and composting



Action on Climate Change and Nature Recovery

Where we want to be:
South Oxfordshire will be a leader in climate action and nature recovery. By 2029, the council will have made significant progress towards achieving its ambitious target of becoming net zero in its operations by 2030. The district itself will also be on track to becoming net zero by 2045. Our natural habitats will be interconnected and thriving, helping to provide safe havens for wildlife and enhancing the district's biodiversity. We will work to support our residents and communities to adapt and foster resilience to extreme weather events and be well prepared for the impacts of a changing climate.

Dashboard:
The Power BI Dashboard landing page for this Priority contains performance data over time (where available) and supporting narrative.



Deliver action on climate change

Promote sustainable practices

Enhance nature recovery



How we will do it:

- Direct Action
- Working in Partnership
- Exerting Influence

How we will do it:

- Within the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26
- Beyond the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26 (i.e 2026/27 later)
- Ongoing/business as usual

Strategic Priority: Action on climate change and nature recovery
Strategic Objectives: Deliver action on climate change, enhance nature recovery, promote sustainable practices

Outcomes	What we will do	How we will do it	How we will measure progress	How we will report it	Performance	Progress against target
Expand and scale-up decarbonisation activity	Council-owned homes decarbonisation programme Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery		•Percentage of council-owned homes with an EPC rating of C or above	100% by Q4 2026/27 / RAG & trajectory	93%	Ongoing
			•Number of council-owned homes with renewable energy systems	9 homes by Q1 2027/28 & RAG	1	Ongoing
	South Oxfordshire Net Zero programme Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Proactively engage with and support businesses to decarbonise their own operations and influence others in the community)		•Progress towards net zero carbon district by 2045 (South Oxfordshire)	RAG, trajectory & narrative	Amber	Ongoing
				Trajectory	Decrease	Ongoing
				Narrative	See dashboard	Ongoing

	Remove fossil fuels from council-operated leisure centres as part of our decarbonisation plans		•Number of council-operated leisure facilities that have undergone decarbonisation	5 by 2027/28 (retrospective)	0	Ongoing
Reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions	South Oxfordshire Net Zero programme Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery		•Reduction in gross operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	X%	14%	Decrease
				RAG & (downward) trajectory (2030 target)	Amber	Ongoing
			•Number and percentage of council fleet vehicles that are zero emission	X number	4 vehicles	Ongoing
				X%	31%	Ongoing
Support communities to alleviate and adapt to extreme weather events	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Watlington Flood Alleviation Scheme Wheatley West Flood Alleviation Scheme Nuneham Courtenay Flood Alleviation Scheme Technical Services delivery		•Narrative and number of flood and drainage alleviation schemes facilitated and/or implemented	3 & narrative	4	Exceeded
			•Summary of other activities to reduce risk of flooding	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
			•Narrative and number of locations where expert advice and support provided on flood alleviation	X number, location and narrative (retrospective only)	9	N/A
	Emergency response work programme		•Advise communities on emergency response plans	X number of emergency response plans & narrative (retrospective)	7	Ongoing
	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Following publication of Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and Action Plan, develop district level adaptation actions for the council and integrate into annual review of the Nature and Climate Action Plan		•Develop district level action plan and incorporate actions into annual review of Nature and Climate Action Plan	Yes/No (by Q4 2025/26) & narrative	Yes	Ongoing

Enhance biodiversity	Fulfilment of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain obligations		•Biodiversity Net Gain reporting (including mean BNG from permitted major and minor developments)	10% uplift in Area Units & narrative	11.11%	Exceeded
	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Promote the development of Habitat Banks in appropriate locations in South Oxfordshire as a key mechanism to drive nature recovery (NCAP)		•Number of habitat banks approved through Section 106 agreements	1 per year & narrative	0	Not Met
			•Number of biodiversity units secured through council agreed habitat banks located in South Oxfordshire	50 Area Habitat Units per year	114	Exceeded
	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Seek opportunities to increase support for and the profile of the Local Wildlife Sites Project as a key mechanism to help deliver Nature Recovery		•Number of local wildlife sites surveyed	7	8	Exceeded
			•Number of local wildlife sites where management advice is provided (NCAP)	5 & narrative	5 & narrative	Met
	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Undertake biodiversity audit of corporate land and develop proposals to put nature recovery at the heart of our grounds maintenance operations		•Percentage of council owned land managed for nature recovery	X% (retrospective) & trajectory (increase)	44% (+5%)	Increase
Collaborate to achieve our climate and ecological goals	Progress towards adoption of an Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and identifying actions for the council to deliver following adoption of the Strategy Plan		•Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy adopted	RAG & trajectory (October 2025)	Green	Completed

	Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy Action Plan		•Amount of residual waste per household (kgs per household)	X kgs per household (decrease) - target of below 330gs per household for 2026/27	322Kg	Exceeded
			•Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	X% (increase) – ongoing target of 62%	57.5%	Not Met

Thriving, healthy, and inclusive communities

Nurturing healthy, safe, and resilient communities in our rural and urban areas while being responsive to the impact of national changes on local need. Championing local businesses,local food production and a thriving, sustainable local economy and fostering community cohesion and inclusion

- Promote sustainable economic development
- Strengthen community engagement and inclusion
- Enhance public health
- Create safe and clean environments

What we will do:

- Fulfilment of statutory safeguarding duty
- Anti-social behaviour service delivery
- Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme
- You Move
- Move Together
- Performing Arts Grants Scheme
- Community Lottery Scheme
- Work in partnership with the creative sector to develop and successfully adopt a Culture, Heritage and Creative Industries Strategy for South and Vale
- S106 public art funding
- Health Inequalities Action Plan – Healthy Didcot (Didcot Garden Town)
- Health Inequalities Action Plan – Berinsfield Health and Wellbeing
- (Berinsfield Garden Village)
- Work in partnership with strategic health partners
- Leisure projects as detailed within the Capital Investment Programme
- Provision of council-operated leisure centres Equalities Road Show
- Equalities Road Show
- Community Hub provision
- Business support and engagement
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26 delivery
- Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26 delivery
- CCTV Hub project
- Great Haseley Trading Estate Vehicle Depot Project
- Implementation of the council's Joint Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028
- Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy Action Plan
- Food hygiene inspections
- Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery
- South Chilterns Catchment Partnership
- Thame Catchment Partnership
- Wallingford Bathing Water Status
- The Mill Brook River Project

Active Communities

3267 individuals have participated in the Move Together programme and 2474 families have engaged with the YouMove initiative to date.



Support for local businesses

17 local businesses were supported in improving their sustainability practices. 9 businesses were supported to engage in inclusive economy activities, but there is further work to be done to meet our target of 15.

The council has continued to make strong progress in delivering its priorities around community health, wellbeing, and inclusive growth through a combination of partnership working and direct action.

Leisure and Community Infrastructure

8 improvement projects are currently underway across local leisure centres.

Equalities Roadshow

10 Equalities Roadshow events have been delivered, raising awareness and promoting inclusivity across the community.

Working closely with partners, the council has continued to provide vital support for vulnerable residents. There were a total of 71 safeguarding referrals to the councils, with 42 per cent meeting the threshold for action. There were 48 referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme, which provides practical support through the provision of home security measures to residents experiencing domestic abuse.

The Community Hub has also played a vital role in supporting residents, handling around 2000 calls and emails during the year. These included 234 requests for food support and 368 enquiries linked to cost-of-living pressures, alongside 846 cases relating to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), highlighting the breadth of support provided. The council also continues to engage in partnership work to enhance community health and wellbeing, with 96.2 per cent of strategic health partnership meetings attended by the council.

The council has been highly effective in deploying external funding to support these priorities. Nearly all available funding has been allocated, with £194,837.68 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) committed (99.58 per cent) and £205,306 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) utilised (98.3 per cent). The Rural England Prosperity Fund has been used to fund capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure that help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. The UKSPF supported investment in communities to increase life chances, support organisations and build skills in local people. The delivery of both funding schemes was closely aligned with achieving the council's strategic priorities, including action on the climate emergency, and improving community and economic wellbeing.

Work on community health and wellbeing has remained a key focus. A total of 2474 families have participated in the YouMove programme, which provides free or low cost activities for eligible families with children 0-17 years old across Oxfordshire. 3267 individuals have engaged with Move Together in the district since its launch in 2021. Move Together is a county wide initiative co-ordinated by Active Oxfordshire and district councils across Oxfordshire that provides personalised support for people with long term health conditions, such as diabetes. A total of 23,412 people participated in activities run by the Active Communities Team between April 2025-March 2026 including YouMove, MoveTogether, community walks, holiday activities for families, sports sessions and much more. These initiatives are complemented by ongoing investment in local facilities, with eight leisure centre improvement projects currently underway to enhance accessibility and user experience, and a total of 1,430,000 visits to South Oxfordshire leisure centres by residents.

As part of the Healthy Didcot Project, the council continues to strengthen communication across the health and wellbeing provision in Didcot, through approaches like the Wellbeing Directory and collaborating with the Communities of Practice. Work is also progressing to support the Didcot Festival of Cultures and develop projects that will contribute to the event's long term legacy. Direct commissioned projects are now underway with Didcot Baby Monday, Survivor Space, HomeStart Southern Oxfordshire, Sustainable Didcot, and the Festival of Cultures. The council also awarded £24,500 in funding to the 2026 Didcot Powerhouse Grants programme, which funds work to tackle inequality and deprivation in the Greater Didcot area and with 18 organisations in total receiving support in 2025/6.

The council has also demonstrated strong community engagement and local investment. The sale of 37,000 Community Lottery tickets has generated £22,000 of funding to support grassroots organisations and projects. Economic development activity has delivered significant tangible benefits. Local businesses have also been supported to grow and adapt, with 17 businesses supported to improve their sustainability practices, exceeding the target of 15, and 48 businesses supported to engage in inclusive economy initiatives, exceeding the target of 15, promoting a thriving and sustainable local economy. The type and location of direct enquiries



721 organisations have engaged with visitor economy support across the two districts - far exceeding the original target of 25. The current business support newsletter open rate is 42.3 per cent, exceeding the target of 33 per cent, which represents the industry standard. There were 2112 subscribers to the business support newsletter at the end of the reporting period. We continue to see growth in subscriber numbers, albeit at a slower rate than anticipated with peaks following active seasonal campaigns. Communications plans seek to accelerate growth in 2026/27.

Alongside this, good progress on environmental health issues has been maintained. Enforcement activity remains robust, with 70 per cent of fly-tipping incidents and 100 per cent of abandoned vehicles leading to formal investigation, out of a total of 818 fly tips and 485 abandoned vehicles. Environmental improvements are also evident, with the number of Air Quality Management Areas reduced from two to one, alongside the delivery of four projects aimed at enhancing water quality. 100 per cent of food hygiene inspections were completed in 2025-2026, exceeding the target of 98 per cent, and with 98 per cent of businesses in the district having a rating of 3 or above. The work to secure a long-term vehicle depot at Great Hazley trading estate is RAG rated amber due to the relative risk of the projection and construction, and these risks are recorded in detail in the corporate project risk register. However, the project is progressing well and is on track to conclude by Summer 2026.

Thriving, healthy, and inclusive communities



Where we want to be:
We envision a district where all communities thrive, with equitable access to resources and a shared sense of prosperity. We want to be a hub of wellbeing and activity, with robust support systems for residents and a flourishing and diverse arts and culture scene. Our regeneration projects will revitalise key areas, providing new, safe and healthy homes, jobs, and sustainable infrastructure that enhance quality of life for all. We want our communities to be adaptive and resilient so they can respond to and recover from unforeseen and challenging events.

Dashboard:
The Power BI Dashboard landing page for this Priority contains performance data over time (where available) and supporting narrative.



How we will do it:

- Direct Action
- Working in Partnership
- Exerting Influence

How we will do it:

- Within the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26
- Beyond the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26 (i.e 2026/27 later)
- Ongoing/business as usual

Strategic Priority: Thriving, healthy, and inclusive communities
Strategic Objectives: Enhance public health, strengthen community engagement and inclusion, promote sustainable economic development, create safe and clean environments

Outcomes	What we will do	How we will do it	How we will measure progress	How we will report it	Performance	Progress against target
Work in partnership to enhance health and wellbeing in our communities	Fulfilment of statutory safeguarding duty		•Total number of safeguarding referrals	X number & narrative (retrospective)	71	N/A
			•Number of safeguarding referrals which met the threshold for action	X number/X% & narrative (retrospective)	27 (34%)	N/A
	Anti-social behaviour service delivery		•Number and type of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to Community Safety Partnership members	X number & narrative (retrospective)	See dashboard	N/A
			•Number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) Community Trigger applications made	X number & narrative (retrospective)	2	N/A

			•Percentage of anti-social behaviour (ASB) Community Trigger applications which met threshold	X% & narrative (retrospective)	48	N/A
	Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme		•Number of referrals to South and Vale Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme	X number & narrative (retrospective)	3267 (YM)	N/A
	You Move Move Together		•Number of people (You Move) and families (Move Together) participating in the council's physical activities programmes/events	X number (increase)	2472 (MT)	N/A
			•Outcomes of the council's physical activities programmes/events (You Move & Move Together)	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
	Performing Arts Grant Scheme		•Percentage of performing arts grants awarded and paid	90%	100%	Exceeded
			•Percentage of projects funded by performing arts grants completed (fully spent) within one year of award	95%	100%	Exceeded
			•Total external investment leveraged as a percentage of performing arts grant awards	£X (retrospective)	£180,000	N/A
				X% (retrospective)	300%	N/A
			•Total number of participants directly involved in projects funded by performing arts grant awards	X number of actual participants compared to number of participants projected in grant bids (retrospective)	5,500	N/A
			•Total number of audience members directly benefitting from performing arts grant awards	X number of actual audience members compared to number of audience members projected in grant bids (retrospective)	48,000	N/A

	Community Lottery Scheme		•Number of Community lottery tickets sold, and annual estimated income generated	X number (retrospective)	36,610	N/A
				£X (retrospective)	£21,966	N/A
			•Annual narrative on community lottery causes and awards	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
	Work in partnership with the creative sector to develop and adopt a Culture, Heritage and Creative Industries Strategy for South and Vale		•Culture, Heritage and Creative Industries Strategy adopted	Yes/No (Summer 2026)	No	Ongoing
	S106 public art funding		•Drawdown of S106 monies to fund public art both directly and in partnership with external organisations	£X S106 monies drawn down	£421,000	
				X number of projects funded (retrospective)	12 projects	
	Health Inequalities Action Plan – Healthy Didcot (Didcot Garden Town)		•Health Inequalities Action Plan reporting – Healthy Didcot (Didcot Garden Town) – South and Vale joint reporting	N/A – narrative only (retrospective)	See dashboard	
	Health Inequalities Action Plan – Berinsfield Health and Wellbeing (Berinsfield Garden Village		•Health Inequalities Action Plan reporting – Berinsfield Health and Wellbeing (Berinsfield Garden Village)	N/A – narrative only (retrospective)	See dashboard	
	Work in partnership with strategic health partners		•Attendance at strategic health meetings	X number & narrative (retrospective)	13	N/A
	Leisure projects as detailed within the Capital Investment Programme		•Number of leisure centre improvement projects underway	6	10	Exceeded
			•Number of leisure centre improvement projects completed	X number & narrative (retrospective) as projects complete	1	N/A

	Provision of council-operated leisure centres		•Number of leisure centre visitors	X number (retrospective)	1,430,453	
Promote equalities within our communities	Equalities Road Show		Public participation in equalities road show events:	1 or more events, then report retrospectively on		
			•Number of events held	X number	10 events	Exceeded
			•Number of attendees	X number	130	N/A
			•Feedback following the event	% (measured via smiley-face balls)	42% Positive, 29 Negative, 29% Neutral	N/A
			•Narrative Feedback	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
Support residents via the Community Hub	Community Hub provision		•Number of residents accessing community hub services	X number of emails and phone calls into the service (retrospective), plus a breakdown of the total into categories (ARAP, Cost of	1,963	N/A
			•Impact of community hub services	Living, Food, Ukraine, Other) N/A (narrative only – to include case studies and an impact report based on survey responses from residents using the service)	See dashboard	N/A
Promote a thriving and sustainable local economy	Business support and engagement		Business engagement activities (joint for South and Vale):			
			•Number of South and Vale Business Support Newsletter subscribers	X number (increase)	2112	N/A
			•South and Vale Business Support Newsletter open rate	33% (generally accepted industry standard for public sector newsletter open rate)	42.3%	Exceeded
			•Number of visitors to ScienceVale.com	100 visits per month / 1200 per year	169 (year)	Not met

			•Number of Visit Southern Oxfordshire Newsletter subscribers	500 subscribers in year (total)	394	Not met
			Delivery of direct business support:			
			•Planning enquiry supported	10 businesses per year	11	Exceeded
			•Businesses supported to improve sustainability	15 businesses per year	17	Exceeded
			•Businesses supported to engage in inclusive economy initiatives	15 businesses per year	5	Not met
			•Businesses supported to access finance	20 businesses per year	27	Exceeded
			•Businesses supported to engage with wider council services	10 businesses per year	11	Exceeded
			•Businesses signposted to external support	15 businesses per year	11	Not met
			•Organisations engaging with Visitor Economy Support	25 organisations per year	722	Exceeded
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26 delivery Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26 Delivery		•Delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26	100% of funds committed ahead of the year-end deadline (31 March 2026) – reporting will confirm the amount of funding committed (£), RAG/trajectory and narrative update Funding allocation:UKSPF - £327,146 REPF - £219,934	UKSPF: 69% £194,837.68 Green REPF: 93% £205,306 Green	Ongoing – project extended Ongoing – project extended
Take action to improve the safety and cleanliness of the local environment	CCTV Hub Project		•Completion of CCTV Hub project	RAG & trajectory	Green	Ongoing

	Great Haseley Trading Estate Vehicle Depot Project		•Great Haseley Trading Estate Vehicle Depot Project progress (joint South and Vale project)	RAG, trajectory & narrative update – target completion Summer 2026	Amber	Ongoing
	Implementation of the council's Joint Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028		•Number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the district	X number (decrease) – target of below 1 for 2026/27	0	Exceeded
	Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy Action Plan		Envirocrime data:			
			•Number of fly tips	X number (decrease) – ongoing target of below 190 each quarter	Q1: 178 Q2: 209 Q3: 205 Q4: 226	Exceeded Not Met Not Met Not Met
			•Percentage of fly tips with formal investigation	X% (increase) – ongoing target of 95%	100%	Exceeded
			•Number of abandoned vehicles	X number (decrease) – ongoing target of below 170 each quarter	Q1: 102 Q2: 118 Q3: 117 Q4: 148	Exceeded Exceeded Exceeded Exceeded
			•Percentage of abandoned vehicles with formal investigation	X% (increase) – ongoing target of 95%	100%	Exceeded
	Food hygiene inspections		Food hygiene inspections:			
			•Percentage of food businesses with a hygiene rating of 3 or above	X% (increase) – ongoing target of 97%	98%	Exceeded
			•Percentage of annual food hygiene inspections completed	X% (increase) – ongoing target of 98%	100%	Exceeded
	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery South Chilterns Catchment Partnership Thame Catchment Partnership Wallingford Bathing Water Status The Mill Brook River Project		•Number of projects to promote and enhance water quality including driving improvements in the ecological health of our rivers	4 & narrative	4	Met

Homes and Infrastructure That Meet Local Needs

Meeting local housing needs through sustainable development that is supported by appropriate infrastructure, protects green spaces, and mitigates the effects of climate change

- Deliver effective planning and high quality development
- Promote infrastructure integration
- Deliver affordable and sustainable housing

What we will do:

- Develop and implement a Housing Strategy Delivery Action Plan
- 16-118 Broadway demolition and planning
- 116-118 Broadway design and build
- Garden Towns/Villages Delivery Plan implementation
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery
- Refugee Accommodation Programme
- Housing Purchases Programme
- Housing Allocations Policy delivery
- Planning Developer Contributions Administration
- Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery
- Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme
- Berinsfield Garden Village Regeneration Strategy
- Great Western Park (Didcot) land transfers of public open and urban spaces
- Nature recovery on council-owned land
- Planning Service Plan delivery
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Joint Local Plan Development

Housing Landlord

By the end of 2025/26, 79 temporary accommodation units were being provided.

Affordable housing delivery

279 new and affordable homes have been delivered by Registered Providers (RPs), exceeding our target of 205.



Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers

62 EV chargers installed, with a utilisation rate of 11%.

Resettlement schemes

Since March 2022, 226 Ukrainian and Afghan households have been successfully housed

As part of its commitment to help deliver more affordable homes, the council continues to have discussions with a range of landowners and promoters to progress housing and residential-led, mixed use schemes. A Housing Delivery Strategy Action Plan was agreed by Cabinet for 2025/26. The plan prioritises the delivery of more affordable housing, strengthens partnerships with housing providers and community led initiatives, and outlines strategic steps to support the decarbonisation of homes across the area.

At the end of 2025/26, the average number of households in emergency temporary accommodation on any single night was 9, a reflection on the rising number of homelessness presentations, but remains below other comparable councils. The average length of stay in temporary accommodation was 59 days, above our target of 42 days. 42 days is the statutory guidance limit for the length of time families with children or pregnant women should be housed in B&B or hotel style temporary accommodation.

During the year the council has seen increased demand for homelessness services. This has been caused by a combination of factors, including the cost-of-living crisis and decline in availability of affordable private rented properties.

The rate of successful homelessness prevention at the end of the year was 82 per cent, above the council's own ambitious target of 80 per cent and considerably above the South East prevention rate of approximately 52 per cent. The most likely outcome for households where homelessness is not prevented is a stay in emergency or temporary accommodation which is both disruptive for the household and expensive for the council. 84 per cent of nominations to social housing occurred within two days, exceeding our target of 80 per cent.

The council is also continuing to increase the amount of housing that it directly provides by purchasing property to make available for various needs. At the end of 2025/26, 51 accommodation units as a housing landlord were provided, so further work is required to reach the target of 80. Since March 2022, 226 Ukrainian and Afghan households have been homed through the success of the refugee accommodation project.

More community-led housing has been delivered and a rural homes project designed to provide new affordable housing schemes has been supported. Since January 2026, the Housing Delivery team has established regular monthly meetings with key partners to review progress on community-led housing projects. Across the district, there are currently a small number of active community-led housing groups at different stages of development. One group is undertaking a Housing Needs Survey to help inform its next steps, while another is exploring opportunities to secure investment to bring forward land for community use. We are continuing our work with Community First Oxfordshire to support initial engagement work to help raise awareness and lay the groundwork for future projects.

Work with registered providers has delivered much needed new housing provision for the district, with 279 target of new and affordable housing units delivered, exceeding our target of 205. 8206 homes have been delivered under the Didcot Garden Town Schemes, making strong progress towards the goal of 15,500 homes by 2031.The commitment to building has been complimented by the council's commitment to biodiversity and nature recovery. There are now 358,000 square metres of meadows on council, substantially above the 32,965 square metres in 2024/25.

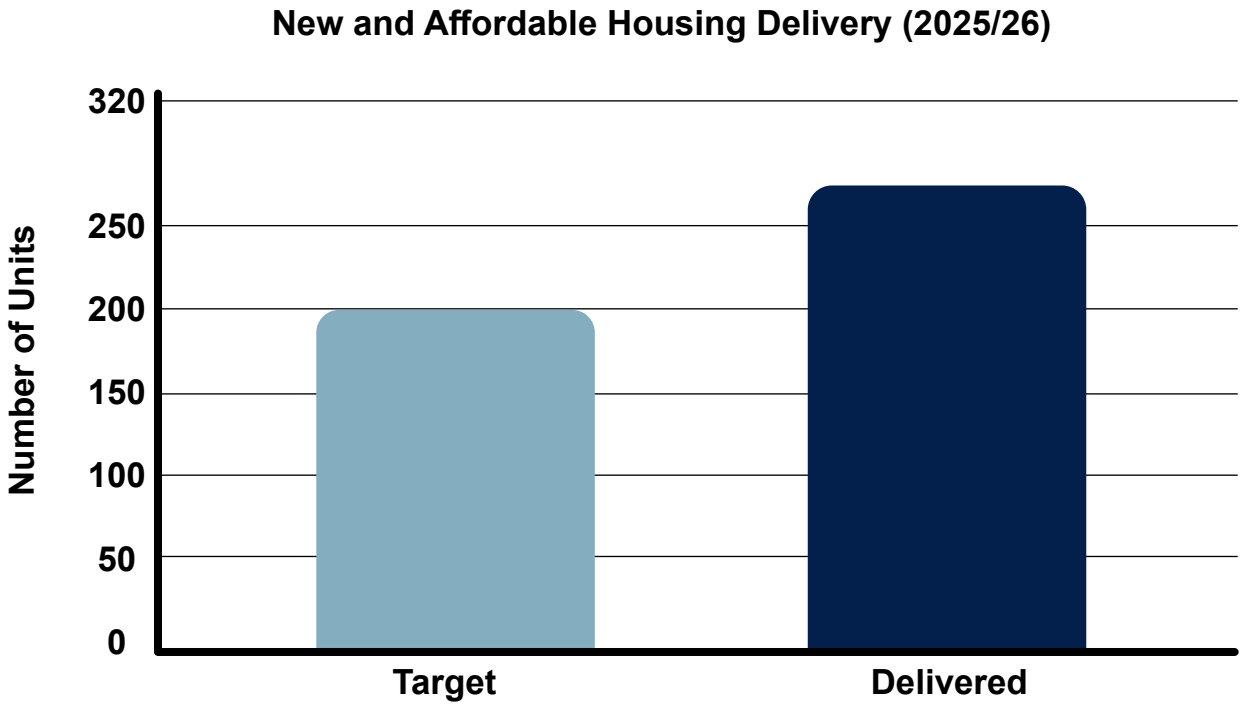
The Broadway redevelopment project continued to progress throughout. Initial works included the demolition of 116–118 Broadway, carried out in July and August 2025 in accordance with prior approval consent. This early milestone enabled the project to move into its next phase, with a design and build contractor appointed in October 2025. At the same time, a decision was taken to progress with phase two of the scheme, covering RIBA Stages 4 to 6.



Technical design work (RIBA Stage 4) also commenced in October 2025 and enabling works and the main redevelopment of the site began in March 2026, marking a significant transition from planning into construction. This will ultimately deliver the affordable housing units and the ground floor community space envisaged in the original proposals and is on track to be completed by November 2027.

The Joint Local Plan was not adopted in December 2025. The plan is presently at examination, but hearings are expected to restart in Q2 of 2026/2027, with adoption now expected in 2027, and is currently RAG rated amber as a work in progress. However, neighbourhood planning continues to form a key part of the council's planning strategy and aim to deliver the homes and infrastructure that meet local need.

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Two neighbourhood plans were adopted in 2025/6 in Chalgrove and Warborough and Shillingford. 43 per cent of parishes in the district are now covered by a total of 53 neighbourhood plans, a reduction of 1 per cent from last year. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans offer the opportunity to include bespoke policies which look to address climate change and nature recovery, and to include housing allocations to address identified local needs and policies which address infrastructure.



Action on Homes and Infrastructure That Meet Local Needs

Where we want to be:
South Oxfordshire will take a balanced approach to development. We will deliver genuinely affordable homes and essential infrastructure that will help to support sustainable lifestyles. Our planning policies will ensure that new developments seamlessly integrate with existing communities, promote the highest environmental standards and appropriate adaptations to mitigate the impact of climate change, and provide or enhance essential infrastructure. In addition, we will have solved many of the challenges facing residents in relation to essential services by addressing the existing infrastructure deficits in our communities.

Dashboard:
The Power BI Dashboard landing page for this Priority contains performance data over time (where available) and supporting narrative



How we will do it:

- Direct Action
- Working in Partnership
- Exerting Influence

How we will do it:

- Within the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26
- Beyond the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26 (i.e 2026/27 later)
- Ongoing/business as usual

Strategic Priority: Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs
Strategic Objectives: Promote infrastructure integration, deliver effective planning and high-quality development, deliver affordable and sustainable housing

Outcomes	What we will do	How we will do it	How we will measure progress	How we will report it	Performance	Progress against target
Increase delivery and acquisition of affordable housing	Develop and implement a Housing Delivery Strategy Action Plan		•Housing Delivery Strategy Action Plan on track for completion	RAG	Green	Completed
			•Number of accommodation units directly provided by the council as a housing landlord	X number (increase) – target of 80 (including LAHF3) for 2026/27 & narrative	51	Ongoing
			•Number of new and affordable housing units delivered by Registered Providers (RPs) across the district	X number (increase) – target of 205 for 2025/26	279	Exceeded

			•Report on the work of Community Land Trusts in operation in the district and the work being done to support them	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
	116-118 Broadway demolition and planning 116-118 Broadway design and build		•Broadway redevelopment project to deliver affordable flats and ground floor community space:	N/A (narrative only) & trajectory	Progressing	Completion expected Nov 2027
			•Demolition of 116-118 Broadway in accordance with prior approval permission.	July/August 2025	Completed	
			•Appointment of a design and build contractor and decision to progress work on phase two of the project (RIBA stages 4-6).	October 2025	Progressing	30 June 2026
			•Commencement of work on RIBA stage 4 (Technical Design).	October 2025	Completed	
			•Work with the Local Planning Authority to discharge the outstanding conditions.	Ongoing	Progressing in line with contract	
			•Commence enabling works and redevelopment of site in accordance with planning permission, to deliver affordable flats and commercial space for community use on the ground floor.	March 2026	Progressing	September 2026

	Garden Towns/Villages Delivery Plan implementation		•Number and trajectory of total homes delivered – Didcot Garden Town (South and Vale joint reporting)	15,500 by 2031 & narrative	8206	Ongoing
			•Delivery of Community Delivery Plan – Didcot Garden Town	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
			•Progress through planning system – Berinsfield Garden Village	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
			•Delivery of Community Delivery Plan – Berinsfield Garden Village	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
Prevent and tackle homelessness	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery		•Homelessness prevention rate/ percentage of potential homelessness cases successfully prevented	X% (aiming for 80%)	82%	Exceeded
			•Housing register numbers – households in housing need	X number (retrospective)	1697	N/A
			•Number of rough sleepers	X number (retrospective)	5	N/A
			•Percentage of nominations to social housing within two days	X% (aiming for 80%) - joint South and Vale target	84%	Exceeded
	Refugee Accommodation Programme		•Number of Ukraine and Afghan refugee families homed since March 2022	X number (retrospective)	226	N/A
	Housing Purchases Programme Housing Allocations Policy delivery		•Number of households in Emergency Temporary Accommodation	X number (decrease) – ongoing target of 8	9	Ongoing
			•Average length of stay in Emergency (hotel/B&Bs) Temporary Accommodation	X days (aiming for 42 days)	59	Ongoing

Deliver integrated infrastructure that meets local need	Planning Developer Contributions Administration		•Amount of S106 housing funding received	£X & narrative (retrospective)	£243,098.34 Received from two developments: £94,676.88 from Land West of Reading Road Lower Shiplake RG9 4AA (P21/S4616/FUL) and £148,421.46 from Reserve Site C Thame (P21/S0917/O)	
			•Amount of CIL funding received for use by the district council and approved for spend, and details of council projects delivered	£X & narrative (retrospective)	£1,437,365.46 = SODC CIL allocation received in 2025/26 £ = £4,124,436 = SODC CIL funding allocated to projects in 2025/26 Narrative = CIL allocated towards the following projects in 2025/26: - £2,715,000 - Henley Leisure Centre and Abbey Sports Centre Decarbonisatio	

					•£750,000 - CIL Grant Scheme Round 2 •£10,000 - Ladygrove East Wild Flower Meadow •£25,000 - Watlington Natural Management •£92,413 - Berinsfield Signage and Amenities Upgrade Project •£200,000 - Berinsfield MUGA Project •£110,000 - Berinsfield Rugby and Football Pitch Drainage £ = £1,267,067 = SODC CIL spend in 2025/26, Narrative = CIL spend in 2025/26 towards the following projects:	

					•£125,800 - Didcot Wave Spin Studio (project complete) •£880 - Thame Leisure Centre New Gym Area (project in progress) •£46,445 - Wallingford Accessible Moorings (project complete) •£712,025 - SODC CIL Grant Scheme (project in progress) •£27,655 - CCTV Upgrade in Didcot and Henley (project complete) •£71,361 - Cornerstone Arts Centre Decarbonisation (project in progress)	

					•£16,131 - Didcot Wave Dryside Changing Room Refurbishment (project in progress) •£1,037 - Cornerstone Arts Centre Capital Works (project in progress) •£56,250 - Trust for Oxfordshire Environment Strategic partnership (project in progress) •£209,483 - Henley Leisure Centre and Abbey Sports Centre Decarbonisation (project in progress) Please note that spend in 2025/26 is from funding allocations made in previous financial years.	

			•Amount of CIL paid to town and parish councils	£X & narrative (retrospective)	£1,643,690.91 Narrative = £960,503.44 paid in April 2025 and £683,187.47 paid in October 2025 in accordance with CIL Regulations. Full details of CIL transferred to parish councils can be found here.	
	Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) delivery Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme		•Number of EV public chargers installed on council owned land and their locations	X number (increase)	62 (=)	Ongoing
			•Utilisation percentage change for EV chargers operated on behalf of the council	X% (increase)	12% (decrease)	Ongoing
	Berinsfield Garden Village Regeneration Strategy		•Berinsfield Garden Village Regeneration Strategy completed	RAG & trajectory (target completion for strategy document is Q2 2026/27)	Green	Completed
	Garden Towns/Villages Delivery Plan implementation		•Infrastructure projects proposed, planned, underway, or delivered – Didcot Garden Town (South and Vale joint reporting)	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
			•Infrastructure projects proposed, planned, underway, or delivered – Berinsfield Garden Village	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A

Increase and enhance green infrastructure	Great Western Park (Didcot) land transfers of public open and urban spaces		•Great Western Park (Didcot) land transfers of public open and urban spaces	X% of land transfers completed (retrospective) & trajectory	6%	Ongoing
	Nature recovery on council-owned land		•Managing meadows on council land	Trend of the number of meadows (increase) Square meterage (increase)	358000 (increase)	Ongoing
Increase public and community involvement in planning	Planning Service Plan Delivery		•Increase email alert sign-ups - planning applications	152 (10% above the last three-year average of sign-ups)	390	Exceeded - All users of the Planning alerts had to resubscribe when a new system was launched during the review period. Therefore, many if not all of the subscribers for the period will likely be previous subscribers to planning alerts rather than actual 'new' customers.
	Neighbourhood Planning		•Number of successful Neighbourhood Plan proposals made (adopted)	X number made (retrospective)	2	N/A
				Increase in % of total number of parishes covered by Neighbourhood Plans N/A (narrative only)	43% (no change)	Not Met
			•Narrative provided on how Neighbourhood Plans have contributed to enhancing the councils' strategic objectives, reporting on the success that has been achieved e.g. protecting green spaces		See dashboard	N/A
Ensure effective planning policies	Joint Local Plan Development		•Joint Local Plan examined and adopted	Yes/No (by March 2026) / RAG & trajectory	No	Progressing at Examination

Financial stability and innovative transformation

Continuous innovation and responsible investment to achieve financial stability

- Exercise responsible and ethical investment
- Ensure financial stability
- Innovate and improve service delivery

What we will do:

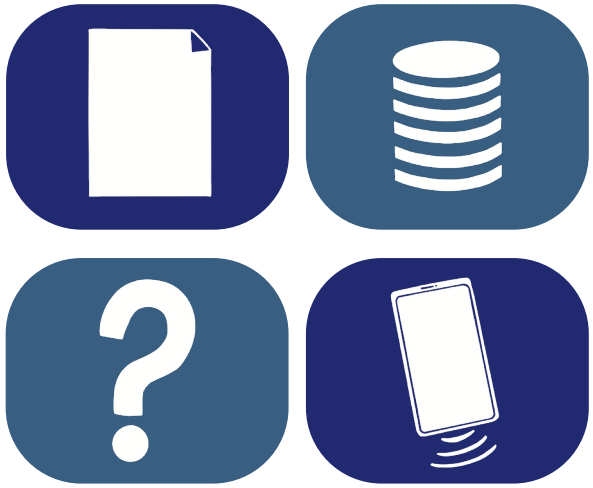
- External funding bid development and delivery
- Budget setting and budget monitoring
- Treasury Management activity
- Asset Management
- Local Government Reorganisation
- Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure Delivery
- Customer Service Centre Service Level Agreement
- Customer Services digital offer
- Council Tax and Benefits digital offer

Local Government Reorganisation

During 2025/26, officers worked with colleagues across Oxfordshire authorities and West Berkshire to develop the Ridgeway and Oxford and Shires proposal.

External Funding

The Council has secured over £2,000,000 in external funding, providing a significant boost to support priority projects, with an overall success rate of 50%.



Customer Queries

58 per cent of customer queries were responded to within 10 working days, below the target of 100%.

Customer Service

81% of calls to the Customer Service Centre are answered within 20 seconds.

In 2025/26, there was a continued focus on maintaining financial stability while improving the way services are delivered. The council is committed to responsible and robust financial management, maximising external funding opportunities, exploring opportunities for revenue generation, and delivering modern, accessible and user-friendly services. This work took place in the context of continuing financial pressures across local government and uncertainty linked to local government reorganisation.

Efforts continued to strengthen financial reporting and forecasting during the year. Budget monitoring showed that service pressures were being actively managed and that the overall revenue position was expected to be strengthened by investment income above the level forecast when the budget was set. A prudent approach was maintained to treasury management, with investments focused on security and activity remaining within the limits set by its Treasury Management Strategy during the first quarter of the year.

Work also progressed to support medium-term financial planning. The 2026/27 budget was prepared against the backdrop of local government reorganisation, future funding uncertainty, inflation, major contract renewals and the need to manage reserves sustainably over the medium term. The council also continued to monitor national funding reform as part of its planning for future years.

Work also progressed to support medium-term financial planning. The 2026/27 budget was prepared against the backdrop of local government reorganisation, future funding uncertainty, inflation, major contract renewals and the need to manage reserves sustainably over the medium term. The council also continued to monitor national funding reform as part of its planning for future years.

The council continued to strengthen its approach to the management of public funds and assets. Work began on producing a joint Corporate Asset Management Framework, for the management and use of council land and property, following implementation of the Corporate Landlord Model and the appointment of Strategic Asset Management officers. The capital programme was also kept under active review, with finance officers and project managers monitoring delivery and profiling during the year.

Transformation work during the year was shaped significantly by local government reorganisation. Following HM Government's announcement on the future of two-tier local government, the council worked with Vale of White Horse District Council and West Berkshire Council on proposals for a new unitary authority. During 2025/26, officers worked with colleagues across Oxfordshire authorities and West Berkshire to develop the Ridgeway and Oxford and Shires proposal.

Focus continued on customer service and digital access. The Customer Service Centre (CSC) answered 81 per cent of calls within 20 seconds, exceeding the service level agreement target of 80 per cent. This indicates a strong level of responsiveness in handling incoming calls, although the figures relate solely to CSC performance and do not include contractor responses. Performance on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) response times was significantly below target, with only 58 per cent of cases receiving a response within 10 working days against a target of 100 per cent. However, the majority of cases recorded as not closed within 10 working days are those passed to council tax or benefits – these cases are passed to Capita, our contractor, and remain marked open as Capita do not provide updates on when a case has received a response.

There were a total of 49 Stage 1 Complaints across the year, 20 of which were upheld, and a total of 9 Stage 2 Complaints across the year, 1 of which was upheld. 2 complaints were referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, one of which was upheld.

In terms of equalities governance, 46 per cent of new formal decision-making processes, public-facing policies, strategies, consultations, and community delivery projects were supported by an Equality Impact Screening or Assessment (EqIA), against a target of 100 per cent. This is shaped by the fact that some S106 and DA agreements fall outside the scope of the Equality Impact Assessment Tool as they do not involve a change in policy, practice, service delivery or resource allocation which could be reasonably expected to impact individuals with protected characteristics. Across other reports however, further work is needed to ensure that equality considerations are consistently embedded across all relevant areas of council activity, and to reach the target of 100 per cent.
The Equalities team will review the existing data collection mechanisms and reporting methodology used to capture equality impact assessment (EqIA) data moving forward. Where an existing policy or decision-making framework is in place and has been subject to an EqIA, individual decisions will be 'screened out'.
We will be strengthening guidance for managers and teams and ensuring that outcomes of EqIAs are more clearly recorded with a view to aligning and linking them to existing governance, policy and decision-making processes. By adopting a more consistent and streamlined approach, the aim is to both enhance compliance and provide a more accurate and comprehensive picture of EqIA activity across the organisation.

Action on Financial Stability and Innovative Transformation



Where we want to be:
While continuing to advocate for local government to be placed on a sustainable financial footing, we aim to be a model of responsible financial management and innovation. We want our council to operate with robust financial health, driven by responsible investments and efficient service delivery. We will transform our services to ensure that our services are modern, accessible, and user-friendly, supported by cutting-edge technology and a culture of continuous improvement. We will maximise funding opportunities, acknowledging the impact our financial decisions have on the services we deliver for local residents and communities, to enhance our community programmes and maintain high standards of financial responsibility.

Dashboard:
The Power BI Dashboard landing page for this Priority contains links to performance data over time (where available) and supporting narrative



How we will do it:



Direct Action



Working in Partnership



Exerting Influence

How we will do it:

Within the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26

Beyond the period of the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26 (i.e 2026/27 later)

Ongoing/business as usual

Strategic Priority: Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs
Strategic Objectives: Promote infrastructure integration, deliver effective planning and high-quality development, deliver affordable and sustainable housing

Outcomes	What we will do	How we will do it	How we will measure progress	How we will report it	Performance	Progress against target
Maximise external funding opportunities to support our services and deliver great outcomes	External funding bid development and delivery		•Value of external funding secured (cumulative total)	£X (retrospective) – increase	£1,723,606	N/A
			•Success rate for external funding bids	75%	100%	Exceeded
			•Benefits of successful funding bids	N/A (narrative only)	See dashboard	N/A
Deliver robust financial reporting and forecasting	Budget setting and budget monitoring		•Overall forecast/outturn against budget (current year)	£X/RAG, trajectory & narrative (retrospective)	£88,000 overspend Amber The Council ended the 2025/26 financial with an overall	

					£88,000 overspend Amber The Council ended the 2025/26 financial with an overall overspend of £88,000 against the budget. This is made up of an overspend at direct service expenditure level of £677,000, there are also planned movement to reserves of £534,000 for use in future years and £127,000 will be carried forward to continue projects in the next financial year. We overachieved on our Treasury Management interest income by £1.3m, and therefore our final position is a small overspend of £88,000.	

					This will be net off against the underspend from last year and will still provide sufficient resources to fund LGR transition costs.	
Exercise strong stewardship of all council assets	Treasury Management activity		•Compliance with Treasury Management Code of Practice	Narrative with some figures (retrospective)	The Council complied with the Treasury Management Code of Practice during 2025/26. and achieved an overall interest income of £8.6 million against a budget of £7.3 million, therefore over achieving by £1.3 million. This is due the interest rates and our investment balance being higher than expected during the year.	N/A

	Asset Management		•Develop Asset Management Plan	Yes/No & narrative	Green	Ongoing
Deliver strategic and operational change projects to drive transformation	Local Government Reorganisation		•Two unitary authority proposal delivered on time	Yes/No (November 2025) & narrative	Green	Completed
Ensure all residents receive great customer service	Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure Delivery		•Number of upheld/not upheld complaints (stage 1/ stage 2/referred to LGSCO)	X number (retrospective) & narrative	See dashboard	Ongoing
	Customer Service Centre Service Level Agreement		•Adhere to Customer service centre (CSC) service level agreements (figures provided for the CSC only, not applicable to contractor responses)	80% calls answered in 20 seconds & narrative	81%	Exceeded
			•Response times on CRM	100% response time within	58%	Not Met
	Customer Services Digital Offer		•Sign-ups to customer services ‘My Account’ (where residents can self-serve etc)	10 working days & narrative X number (increase) & narrative	1031	N/A
	Council Tax and Benefits Digital Offer		•Sign-ups to Council Tax and Benefits online portal	X number (increase)	32,694	N/A